

Short-term Design Workshop Experience with NTNU in Taiwan

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Venue: National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU)

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Affiliation and academic year at the time of study abroad: 2nd year, MD course, Faculty of Design

<Goals of the Program>

To design a new way to solve problems in education through STEAM education methods. This will allow the students to learn practical design methods that are the main focus of the program, and to experience the use of English in an academic setting in the process. Furthermore, these will not only deepen student-to-student interaction, but also promote more active inter-university exchange.

The program was conducted over five days, including visits to an elementary school and a girls' high school, and culminated in a presentation by each group on problems and solutions. During the school visits, I was surprised to see how much effort was put into STEAM education in Taiwan: classrooms were built for STEAM education, teachers were trained, and at the girls' high school, there was a room for developing teaching materials for STEAM education. I have not heard of such efforts in Japan, at least not around me. In the problem posing and solution design, the process was conducted in the order of reviewing the fieldwork, posing educational problems, and generating solutions, and communication within the group was conducted in English. This process was something I had often done in my international program classes in Japan, and I think I was able to make use of that experience to make sense of it. Although communication was not as smooth as I would have liked, I was eventually able to convey my intentions using gestures and other means, and this gave me confidence. However, there was still a big gap between myself and the NTNU students in terms of English proficiency, and I regretted my lack of learning. I felt that I would like to take measures to improve this point for my six-month study abroad program in the Netherlands.

Things outside of school

From here, I would like to talk about my experiences outside of school. In addition to the academic part of this program, the program also emphasized interaction with NTNU students

outside of the school, and we spent a lot of time together, eating together and being guided around Taipei. Before I talk about that, I would first like to mention a few things I noticed about Taiwan. First, "Japan" is more prevalent in Taiwan than I had expected. This may have something to do with the fact that Taiwan was a Japanese colony in the past, but geographical proximity is also a major factor. Japanese language is everywhere, and there are many Japanese food chains such as Sushiro, Mos Burger, Sukiya, and Marugame Seimen. Secondly, toilet paper cannot be flushed down the toilet. It is often the case that toilet paper is not provided in the toilets, so it may be a necessity for travelers in Taiwan. The culture of night markets is deeply rooted in Taiwan. They have become a tourist attraction, and are also commonly used by local people, making them an indispensable part of the Taiwanese culture. Prices in Taiwan are basically lower than in Japan. NTNU students took me to a restaurant every day for lunch, to a night market at night, and on the last day, they took me to the National Palace Museum, the zoo, and nightlife spots for a day. I cannot thank them enough for their hospitality. They showed me the best of Taiwanese cuisine, from local to famous, and I was able to enjoy Taipei to the fullest in a very short period of time. In addition, Taipei has many museums and art galleries, and visiting them was a good opportunity for me to learn about new forms of design. All in all, I feel that this experience was a very good stepping stone for my future long-term study abroad. I learned firsthand, not through knowledge, but through experience, that it is necessary to become accustomed to the different culture of a foreign country when studying abroad, including departure and entry procedures, that it is more enjoyable to communicate with local people if you know some of the local language, and the great value of interaction with people who know the area. I am truly glad that I was able to participate. The next time NTNU students come to Fukuoka, I will return the hospitality to the best of my ability.



I went to the famous Din Tai Fung with Taiwanese students.



The cost-effective night market stalls



Eating snacks bought by local students after completing the program.